

Appeal of Cigars, Cigarillos, and Little Cigars Among Youth

In recent years, the popularity of cigars, including cigarillos and little cigars (also known as brown cigarettes), has increased rapidly in the United States.¹ Although the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the authority to regulate tobacco products, it has not yet used its authority to regulate cigars.¹ As a result, tobacco companies have deliberately manufactured and marketed cigar products to appeal to youth. This fact sheet provides information about cigars, their appeal to youth, and use of these products among youth in Indiana.

Cigars vs. cigarettes²

The key difference between cigars and cigarettes is that cigars contain tobacco wrapped in a tobacco leaf or other substance that contains tobacco. Cigarettes contain tobacco wrapped in paper or any substance that does not contain tobacco.

- **Premium cigars** can measure over 7 inches in length and typically contain at least a half ounce of aged, fermented tobacco.
- **Cigarillos** are cigars that are slightly bigger than cigarettes, contain about 3 grams of tobacco, and do not contain filters.
- **Little cigars** are similar in size and appearance to cigarettes, but the wrappers contain a small amount of tobacco and are brown in color. They typically contain less than 1 gram of tobacco, usually have a filter, and are often sold in packs of 20 that look very similar to packs of cigarettes. Because of these similarities, youth may confuse these products with cigarettes.

Cigars are sold in a variety of youth-appealing flavors.¹

Although the FDA has banned the sale of flavored cigarettes, it has not banned flavored cigars. Currently, cigars are available in multiple flavors that appeal to youth, such as menthol, candy, or fruit flavors. They are often marketed with names that appeal to young people such as “DA Bomb Blueberry” or “SwagBerry.” Nationally, over 6 in 10 students who use cigars report using flavored cigar products.³

In Indiana:⁴

- Nearly 12% of high school students and 2% of middle school students report using Black & Milds, Swisher Sweets, or Phillies Blunts, which are cigar brands that are commonly sold in flavored varieties.
- Nearly 45% of high school students and 37% of middle school students who currently use cigars report ever having tried flavored little cigars.

Cigar packaging is designed to appeal to youth.¹

Cigars, especially flavored cigars, are often sold in brightly colored packaging designed to appeal to youth. They may also be sold in any package size, including packages containing a single stick or a few sticks. This often makes the products cheaper and more accessible to youth.

Cigarette vs. Little Cigar:



Top: Cigarette

Bottom: Little cigar/brown cigarette



Flavored
little cigars

Cigarettes

Cigar use among Indiana Youth, 2014:⁴

- 4.9% of middle school and 23.4% of high school students reported ever smoking a cigar in their lifetime.
- 1.7% of middle school students and 9.3% of high school students were current cigar smokers.
- The proportion of high school students who smoke cigars is over two times the proportion of Indiana adults who smoke cigars (3.9%).⁹



Appeal of Cigars, Cigarillos, and Little Cigars Among Youth

Cigars are cheaper than cigarettes.

Because youth are more sensitive to tobacco prices than adults, they often choose cheaper tobacco products.⁵ Cigar prices are typically lower than cigarette prices, and the Indiana tax on cigars is lower than the tax on cigarettes. These lower prices may make cigar products more appealing and accessible to youth than cigarettes.

Cigar placement and promotion targets youth.¹

While cigarettes and smokeless tobacco must be placed behind the counter in stores, cigars may be placed on store countertops where they are visible and easily accessible to youth. Cigars may also be heavily marketed with signs and price promotions at the point of sale to target youth.

Youth access to cigars

Because of their lower price, direct marketing to youth, and placement in highly visible areas, cigars may be very accessible for youth to purchase. Among Indiana high school students, nearly 20% of current cigar users under age 18 reported buying cigars themselves in the past 30 days.⁴

Concerns about youth cigar use

Youth cigar use may be a gateway to regular cigarette use

- 56% of Indiana high school students who report smoking cigars also report smoking cigarettes.⁴

Youth cigar use has declined more slowly than cigarette use⁴

- Between 2000 and 2014, cigarette smoking dropped 62% from 31.6% to 12.0% among Indiana high school students. In contrast, cigar smoking dropped 40% from 15.4% to 9.3%.

Cigar use can be just as dangerous as cigarette smoking.

- Cigar smoking increases the risk of many diseases including cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).^{6,7,8}

References

¹ Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids. Not your grandfather's cigar: a new generation of cheap and sweet cigars threatens a new generation of kids. 2013. Accessed 9/21/2015 from https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what_we_do/industry_watch/cigar_report/2013CigarReport_Full.pdf.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cigars. Accessed 10/21/2015 from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/cigars/.

³ Corey CG et al. Flavored tobacco product use among middle and high school students - United States, 2014. *MMWR* 2015 64(38);1066-1070.

⁴ Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey, 2014.

⁵ Chaloupka FJ, Liccario Pacula R. The impact of price on youth tobacco use. In *Smoking and Tobacco Control Monographs, monograph 14, chapter 12*. Retrieved from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/tcrb/monographs/14/m14_12.pdf.

⁶ National Cancer Institute. (2010). Cigar smoking and cancer. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cigars>

⁷ Burns, David M. (n.d.). Cigar smoking: overview and current state of the science. In *Smoking and tobacco control monographs, monograph 9* (Chapter 1). Retrieved from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/m9_1.PDF

⁸ Hoffman, Dietrich & Hoffmann, Ilse. (n.d.). Chemistry and toxicology. In *Smoking and tobacco control monographs, monograph 9* (Chapter 3). Retrieved from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/m9_3.PDF

⁹ Indiana Adult Tobacco Survey, 2015.

Hazards of cigars:^{6, 7, 8}

Cigars contain high levels of nicotine and are addictive.

Cigar smoking increases the risk of:

- Cancer of the lip, tongue, mouth and throat
- Cancer of the larynx
- Cancer of the esophagus
- Lung cancer
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Coronary heart disease

Cigar smoke contains the same toxic chemicals as cigarettes.

Secondhand smoke from cigars is a major source of indoor air pollution.

